



**MARRIAGE AND
DIVORCE
State Summary**

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Surveillance

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 2000 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the Social Security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential.

Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 2000 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes which do file these certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

MARRIAGE

Counts and Rates

In 2000, a total of 40,561 marriages were held in Louisiana, a decrease of 782 marriages from the 1999 total 41,343 (Table MD1). Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, Louisiana's 2000-marriage rate was 9.1 marriages per 1,000 population. This rate was lower than the 1999 rate of 9.5 (Figure MD1, Table MD1). After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, Louisiana's marriage rates through the 1990's have been stable and have remained above 9.0 per 1,000

population (Figure MD1, Table MD1). National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1980s, but a steep decline in state rates during the 1980s caused the rates to fall below national rates as the decade progressed. In the 1990s, however, state rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates. The **marriage rate** measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of marriages occurring in a geographic area during one year by the total population of the area, then

multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population. Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana resident marriages if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of brides and grooms are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside their residence area.

**Figure MD1. Marriage Rates
Louisiana and United States 1985-2000**

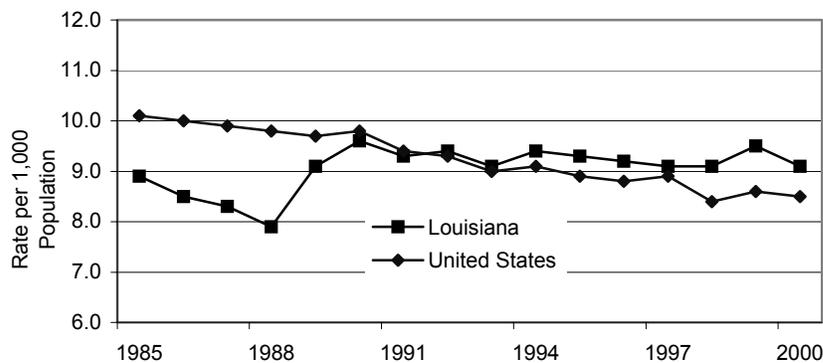


Table MD1.
Numbers and Rates of Marriages
Louisiana and United States, 1985-2000

Year	Louisiana		United States
	Number	Rate ⁺	Rate ⁺
1985	39357	8.9	10.1
1986	37459	8.5	10.0
1987	36185	8.3	9.9
1988	33974	7.9	9.8
1989	38574	9.1	9.7
1990	40443	9.6	9.8
1991	39161	9.3	9.4
1992	40053	9.4	9.3
1993	39364	9.1	9.0
1994	40405	9.4	9.1
1995	40516	9.3	8.9
1996	40221	9.2	8.8
1997	39662	9.1	8.9
1998	39544	9.1	8.4
1999	41343	9.5	8.6
2000	40561	9.1	8.5

⁺Rate per 1,000 population
 Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes
 Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

Age of the Bride and Groom

In the year 2000, the largest proportion of Louisiana brides (26.9%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were fairly evenly distributed between the 20-24 and the 25-29 year age groups, 22.2% and 22.5% , respectively (Table MD2).

Table MD2.
Number of Marriages by Age of Groom and Age of Bride
Louisiana, 2000

Age of Groom	Total	Age of Bride														
		Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+	Unk.
Total	40561	7	590	3008	10908	8422	5726	4172	3154	2134	1141	564	334	191	168	42
LT 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15-17	95	0	39	40	15	****	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-19	1289	****	220	677	333	33	12	6	0	****	0	****	0	0	0	****
20-24	8996	****	271	1794	5485	1099	263	55	19	****	0	****	0	0	****	****
25-29	9138	****	45	364	3600	3694	1054	277	75	20	****	****	0	0	0	****
30-34	6481	0	12	87	1010	2282	1978	766	241	77	20	5	****	0	0	****
35-39	4697	0	****	33	301	839	1394	1277	563	209	67	8	****	0	****	****
40-44	3461	0	****	5	106	299	609	947	953	405	98	32	****	0	0	****
45-49	2456	0	0	****	34	114	242	479	694	616	215	46	6	****	****	****
50-54	1674	0	0	****	13	35	97	237	378	431	336	105	24	12	****	0
55-59	941	0	0	0	****	12	44	84	144	206	222	155	58	9	****	0
60-64	533	0	0	0	****	9	23	25	59	94	102	105	78	28	8	****
65-69	337	0	0	0	0	****	8	7	17	43	42	58	93	55	13	0
70+	360	0	0	0	****	0	****	9	10	26	25	43	60	72	101	12
Unk.	103	0	0	****	6	****	****	****	****	****	10	****	8	11	36	14

**** refer to counts less than 5 but greater than 0.

The average age of Louisiana brides in 2000 was 30.5 years. The average for grooms was 33.0 years. Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in Louisiana (*Table MD3*).

Table MD3.
Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms
Louisiana, 1992-2000

Year of Marriage	Average Age in Years		Median Age in Years	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4
1997	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7
1998	30.0	32.4	26.7	28.8
1999	30.0	32.4	26.8	28.9
2000	30.5	33.0	27.2	29.4

During the 1990s, there was a decrease in the rates of marriage in younger age groups (15-19 years), and an increase in rates of older age groups (20 years and older). Following a rise in the early 1990s, marriage rates subsequently declined during the balance of the 1990's among men and women below age 24 years. This same time period also showed a steady increase in marriage rates for men over age 24. Generally, men are more likely to get at 25 years and older than women are (*Table MD4*, *Figures MD2 and MD3*).

Table MD4.
Marriage Rates⁺ by Sex and Age
Louisiana, 1988-2000

Year	15-19		20-24		25-29		30-44	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1988	34.0	13.4	63.6	62.2	37.0	46.5	15.5	19.8
1991	34.7	13.6	70.7	66.6	46.9	67.4	20.3	24.7
1994	29.4	11.5	70.37	65.1	52.1	63.3	22.6	26.9
1997	22.6	8.6	64.9	55.6	55.7	64.8	23.3	27.9
2000	19.8	7.5	66.4	55.8	55.8	62.9	25.6	30.1

⁺Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population

Figure MD2. Marriage Rates among Females by Age Group
Louisiana, 1988-2000

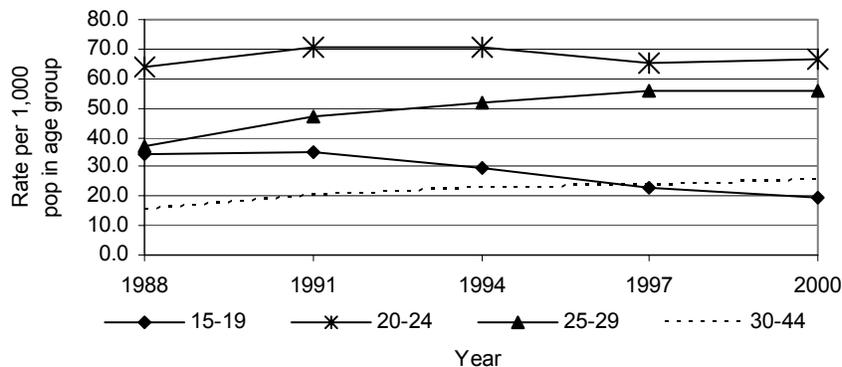
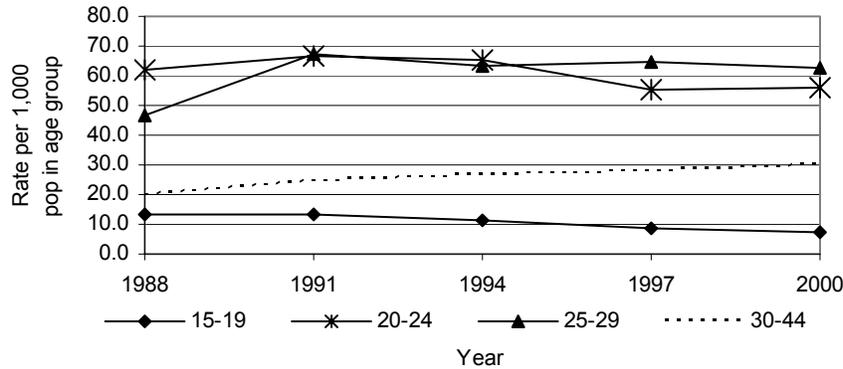


Figure MD3. Marriage Rates among Males by Age Group
Louisiana, 1988-2000



Prior Marital Status

In Louisiana in 2000, 47.3% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom, 58.8% of brides and 58.7 of grooms stated that they had never been married (*Table MD5*). In 23.0% marriages in Louisiana, in the year 2000, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced; 35.2% of all brides and 35.8% of all grooms stated that they were previously divorced.

Table MD5.
Number of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom
Louisiana, 2000

Previous Marital Status of Groom	Previous Marital Status of Bride					
	Total	Never Married	Widowed	Divorced	Marriage Annulled	Unknown
All	40561	23854	1295	14275	50	1087
Never Married	23819	19193	216	4295	26	89
Widowed	1130	154	385	585	****	5
Divorced	14534	4432	689	9331	15	67
Marriage Annulled	44	18	5	13	7	****
Unknown	1034	57	0	51	****	925

**** In cell refers to counts less than 5 but greater than 0.

In the past twelve years, Louisiana has experienced a decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, and an increase in the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced (*Table MD6*).

Table MD6.
Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status
Louisiana, 1988-2000

Year	Never Married			Divorced		
	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both
1988	45.9	46.2	38.0	29.3	29.4	17.9
1991	61.9	62.4	50.5	32.8	32.3	20.4
1994	60.6	61.1	49.1	34.3	34.4	21.7
1997	58.5	59.3	47.2	35.3	35.4	22.5
2000	58.8	58.7	47.3	35.2	35.8	23.0

Note: Rate of never married and divorced are substantially lower in 1988 as the number of records coded as unknown were substantially greater than in subsequent years.

In the year 2000, the median age of those who stated they were previously married was approximately 17 years higher than those marriages between never-married brides and grooms (*Table MD7*).

Table MD7.
Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage,
by Previous Marital Status
Louisiana, 2000

Previous Marital Status	Average Age		Median Age	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
All	30.5	33.0	27.2	29.4
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	24.4	26.3	22.7	24.5
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	29.8	36.0	27.7	33.6
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	33.3	32.3	31.5	30.4
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	40.5	43.8	39.0	42.0

Race of Bride and Groom

In the year 2000, 96.4% of Louisiana marriages were between brides and grooms of the same race. This proportion excluded brides or grooms of unknown race and assumed that brides and grooms of *other races* i.e. other than black or white were of the same-race. In 67.6% of marriages, both were white. In 28.1% of marriages, both were black (*Table MD8, MD9*). 3.2% of total marriages were mixed race and 2.0% of total marriages were mixed race marriages between whites and blacks (*Table MD8, MD9*). If *other race* brides and *other race* grooms were assumed to be of different races, mixed marriages account for 3.9% of all marriages, and same-race marriages accounted for 95.7% of all marriages.

Table MD8.
Number of Marriages by
Race of Groom and Race of Bride
Louisiana, 2000

Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	40561	28139	11707	581	134
White	27965	27399	280	240	46
Black	11966	524	11385	44	13
Other	515	182	35	296	****
Unknown	115	34	7	****	73

****refers to count less than 5 but greater than 0.

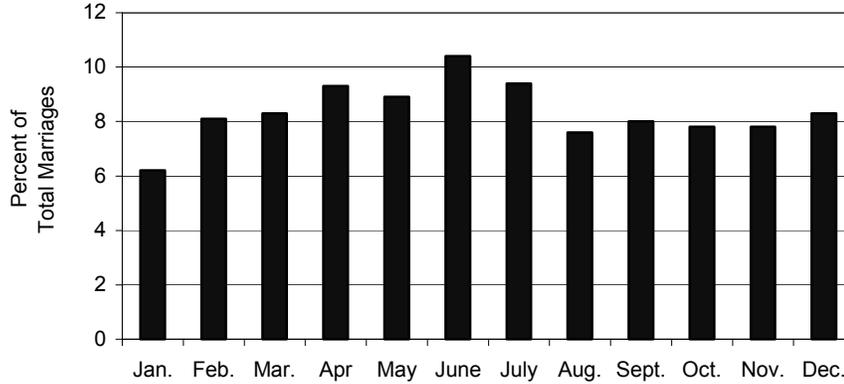
Table MD9.
Percent of Total Marriages by
Race of Groom and Race of Bride
Louisiana, 2000

Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	100.0	69.4	28.9	1.4	0.3
White	68.9	67.6	0.7	0.6	0.1
Black	29.5	1.3	28.1	0.1	0.0
Other	1.3	0.4	0.1	0.7	0.0
Unknown	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2

Month of Marriage

In Louisiana, there was an average of 3,380 marriages (8.3% of all marriages) each month in the year 2000. In January, the number decreased to 2,496 (6.2% of all marriages); in June, it increased to 4,203 or 10.4% of all marriages (*Figure MD4, Table MD10*).

**Figure MD4. Percentage of Marriages by Month of Occurrence
Louisiana, 2000**



**Table MD10.
Number and Percent of Marriages
By Month of Occurrence
Louisiana, 2000**

Month	Number	Percent	Daily Average
Total	40561	100.0	111
January	2496	6.2	81
February	3268	8.1	113
March	3385	8.3	109
April	3790	9.3	126
May	3598	8.9	116
June	4203	10.4	140
July	3825	9.4	123
August	3087	7.6	100
September	3229	8.0	108
October	3154	7.8	102
November	3165	7.8	106
December	3361	8.3	108

DIVORCE**Counts**

Divorce reports were submitted by 55 parishes in Louisiana which represented 86% of all Louisiana parishes. Many of the certificates that were submitted had incomplete information. There were a total of 14,923 divorces in the 55 parishes which submitted divorce counts. No counts were available for 9 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (*For divorce counts refer to Table MDP1 in Marriage and Divorce Parish Tables in the diskette*).